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BY MISS M. E. BRADDON.

CHAPTER I.

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Mrs. Drabble laughed and shook her head. She had been a slim slip of a girl once upon a time, but it was so long ago that she had forgotten the sensation.

Darnel park was one of those places which leave within the mind an impression of perfect beauty, especially when seen for the first time in the summer months. Fine old oaks, beeches, and chestnuts, here and there, grass, plantations of laurel and Douglas fir sheltered the park from the outer world; while on one side of the house there was a wide expanse of broken ground, a region of deep hollows and craggy banks, mighty thickets of rhododendron and azalea, which Col Studebaker

"There was a flower show at Walton Colne, and Sir George and my lady were obliged to be present. Your rooms as ready, colonel. Shall I room you now?"

"No, sir; would you like to see Miss Darneley first? She is in the morning-room, expecting you."

"Miss Darneley," cried the colonel eagerly. "Miss Grace, you mean?"

"No, sir, Miss Darneley; Sir Allan's sister, colonel." The butler, in a strict politeness added the butler, gravely, deliberately, apologetically, "our own young lady is Miss Darneley, but Sir Allan's sister would never give in to it. I should never have the pleasure to attend her as Mrs.

"Oh," said the colonel, "Sir Allan's sister is in the morning-room," as if the mere mention of that lady's existence came upon him like a shock. "Yes, I will see Miss Darnel before I go to my room. My man will bring my portmanteau on presently. I was in too great a hurry to wait for him."

He followed Purden along the corridor and into one of those gracious, home-like interiors which are the slow growths of

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cordially, a little touch of suppression, which ought to have been lightful to any man. But the colonel was not enthusiastic. He had thanked for the English landscape just now; he had not the air of thanking God. Dora Darnel. He seated himself in low reposeful chair she suggested to him; he took the offered cup of tea from her hand, but he was not demonstrative of

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